

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

GOVERNING BY CRISIS

Mr. REID. Madam President, a path to avert yet another Republican-manufactured shutdown is before us now. This evening the Senate will vote to invoke cloture on a clean continuing resolution that keeps the Federal Government open and funded. We believe debate should continue on this issue, and that is why we are voting the way we are going to vote. Following that vote, the Senate will then proceed to final passage of a clean funding measure—sometime tomorrow or Wednesday. That will take a simple majority. I am pleased that we are on the verge of avoiding another Republican-sponsored shutdown of the Federal Government. We are fortunate cooler heads are prevailing.

But I would be remiss if I didn't remind everyone—especially my Republican colleagues—that this last-minute scramble to do our most basic job is as unnecessary as it is reckless. We are 2 days from a shutdown—only 2 days. And why? Because Republicans made it their No. 1 priority to undermine women's health. Keeping the government open, funded, and serving the American people was a secondary concern for these extremists in the Republican Party. My friend the Republican leader, in talking about this choice a few days ago, the choice between—he said Planned Parenthood; I say the health of women—understand, the Republicans couldn't even get a majority vote on this. They couldn't get a majority vote; they were down in the forties. So even the Republicans think what is going on now is foolish. Keeping government open and funded and serving the American people was a secondary concern for those extremists. That is too bad.

So while I am pleased that we now have a path forward to avoid a shutdown, I am nonetheless concerned about the Republican modus operandi of always governing by crisis. Remember, this is the fifth time in 2 years the Republicans have manufactured an unnecessary shutdown crisis. Two years ago they actually shut down the government. For 17 days, Republicans shut down the government, and we were only able to get ourselves out of that morass because—for example, in the House of Representatives, two-thirds of the Republicans in the House voted to keep the government closed. That is unbelievable, but that is the way it was. Here it is now 2 years later, and we are on the verge of another shutdown.

Remember this: This is the fifth time in 2 years that Republicans have manu-

factured an unnecessary showdown crisis—and it is a showdown. Too bad it is leading to a shutdown.

Exactly 2 years ago, as I indicated, of course, they shut down the Federal Government because of health care. Seven months ago, Republicans almost shut down the Department of Homeland Security. Why? Over an immigration issue. The Department of Homeland Security—they were going to shut it down. It was saved in the last minute. These are the agencies within this Department that protect us. They protect us from terrorists, and they protect us from those many things that happen in our country that we need protection from.

This past spring, it shut down key national security programs that were part of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Why? They were fighting among themselves. The Republican leader wanted a bill for a certain length of time. People within his caucus wanted one for another length of time. There was a fight among them, not among us, but they came close to wreaking havoc. They did wreak some havoc because the program was shut down for a while.

More recently, Republicans shut down the Export-Import Bank, endangering the hundreds of thousands of jobs this program supports. It is still closed.

Now we are just days from another shutdown—another kind of shutdown but a big one. And although it appears we will sidestep a Republican-manufactured crisis this week, the disaster is looming. We still have a long, difficult road ahead.

The continuing resolution will pass this week, but it is for a short term, and it funds our government through December 11. The measure is very shortsighted—December 11. That means within the coming weeks, we will again be negotiating with Republicans to avoid another shutdown.

We will also have to find a way to pay our bills to avoid a catastrophic default on our debt. Republicans tried that once. We came within minutes of doing that. The Federal Government—this great country of ours—wouldn't be able to pay its bills.

But we see the press. We see all these stories about the Speaker, who is going to step down in 5 weeks, and we hear the Republicans over there. They are joyous. One Republican running for President announced this, and there was cheering. And the person running for President—who serves in the Senate—was part of the cheer. Another Republican Presidential candidate came to the same meeting, and the same thing happened. It is hard to comprehend that people are cheering for this government to be closed. That is what they are doing. We shouldn't pay our debt?

The Republican House is in a sad state. Last week the far right showed that it can depose a Speaker and has emerged more powerful than ever,

more outspoken than ever. Members of the House will hold their leadership elections in the coming days, and I hope they elect some sensible leaders. I am deeply concerned.

I came to the floor on Friday and spoke as honestly as I could of my respect for JOHN BOEHNER. I think it is unfair that people are piling on. Did I always agree with him? No. But he never misled me and always told me the way it was.

I am deeply concerned that even those Republican leaders previously inclined toward compromise have already lost the courage to stand up to the far right when it matters the most, and they have said so in the press. That is too bad.

Come November 1, we have no way of knowing what House Republicans will do—this is after their elections to replace Congressman BOEHNER. We have no idea what they are going to do, whether they will try to again steer our government off a cliff, as numerous House Members have said in the last few days. Do they want to go off that cliff or do they want to recklessly hammer the global economy? Maybe both.

We need to get to work immediately to avoid being right back here on December 11 facing another Republican shutdown because if one thing is clear, it is that Republicans see impending catastrophe as a political tool that they need to exploit.

The American people don't want another 15 months of Republican brinkmanship. Our constituents don't want every simple legislative task to turn into a doomsday clock. So I invite my Republican colleagues to quit governing by crisis. Let's put the threat of government shutdown to bed now, and then let's turn our attention to something that both sides agree on—getting rid of the dangerous sequester cuts.

I have heard speeches given by the senior Senator from Arizona—someone who knows a little bit about the military—and he says sequester cuts are terrible. I agree with him.

These devastating cuts were never supposed to happen. They were meant to drive bipartisan budget negotiations. Getting rid of sequestration has wide bipartisan support in both Chambers, I hope. We should start working right now on a bipartisan budget fix that helps the military, helps the middle class, and puts our country on a more sound economic footing. And let's do it without the threat of a government shutdown. We can do it, but only if Republicans don't divert us to yet another catastrophe.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

**TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015**

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 719, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 719, an act to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with McConnell (for Cochran) amendment No. 2689, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016.

McConnell amendment No. 2690 (to amendment No. 2689), to change the enactment date.

McConnell motion to refer the House message on the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, McConnell amendment No. 2691, to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2692 (to the instructions) amendment No. 2691), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2693 (to amendment No. 2692), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until the cloture vote on the motion to concur with an amendment in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 719 will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, Wednesday night is the deadline. On Wednesday night, the authority of the government of the United States to do business ends. The funding for our government ends. It is a scary time. We don't want that to happen—most of us—because we know it will be catastrophic. There will be people who will suffer if we fail to do our job.

Now, this isn't the first time we have been up against a deadline. We have faced them before, and many times we have to buy a little extra time to negotiate the budget. That is understandable. In this circumstance, though, we actually have announced candidates for the Presidency of the United States who are calling for a government shutdown.

What happens when our government shuts down? Well, it is pretty obvious. Agencies stop doing business as usual. What we find, though, is that the impact goes far beyond just that simple statement.

I went back to Illinois this last weekend, and I went for a visit to Scott Air Force Base. It is the largest single employer in the State of Illinois and downstate.

In 2013—the last time we had a government shutdown—the junior Senator from Texas, Senator TED CRUZ, wanted to shut down our government to protest ObamaCare. So he successfully closed down the government and found

other Republicans who would join him in that effort, and it went on for a long period of time.

In 2013, at Scott Air Force Base, one of the most important defense facilities in our country, in Belleville, IL, we saw two-thirds of the civilian workforce—that is about 3,400 people—sent home immediately without pay. Those who were required to report for duty, including all of the base's 5,000 military personnel, would have been given IOUs rather than paychecks. Scott Air Force Base families were forced to limit their spending and stretch their savings while the Senator from Texas gave speeches on the floor about Dr. Seuss. I am not making this up.

This had an impact on the entire region of Southwestern Illinois. Scott Air Force Base has a \$1.6 billion economic impact on the local area, including supporting thousands of indirect jobs. Every part of this regional economy felt the impact of this decision to shut down the government 2 years ago—gas stations, restaurants, small businesses, contractors, everybody.

Now, this brinkmanship goes far beyond flowery speeches on the floor and press attention. The last shutdown hurt the gross domestic product of the United States of America. Consumer confidence drops when the government shuts down. We saw \$2 billion in lost productivity from furloughed employees.

Federal Reserve Chairman Janet Yellen said:

We have a good recovery in place that's really making progress and to see Congress take actions that would endanger that progress, I think that would be more than unfortunate. So to me that's Congress' job.

The CEO of JPMorgan Chase, a man named Jamie Dimon, speaking of the last Republican government shutdown, said, "Washington has really slowed American down." I agree. And if that were the only thing that was happening, it would be bad enough. But there is more.

Today I went to a neighborhood in Chicago, the All Saints Episcopal Church in Ravenswood. They are doing a restoration on this beautiful church built back in the 19th century. I met with the pastor there. We were at the food pantry of this church. This Episcopal Church tries to help neighborhood residents who are struggling to find enough to eat.

We had a little press conference with the local Congressman, MIKE QUIGLEY and JAN SCHAKOWSKY, and people who represented the food pantries of Chicago in that area. They are worried about a shutdown and what a shutdown means to them. How would it affect the All Saints Episcopal Church food pantry and the men and women who go in there on a regular basis to pick up some canned goods to get by? Here is what it means. Many of these people are on food stamps. We call it the SNAP program now. The SNAP program, on average, gives a person food worth \$7 a day, so the notion that peo-

ple are going out for steak dinners on food stamps is not quite accurate.

Sara—and I won't use her full name—who is 81 years old, came up to talk about what life is like for her. She was a hard-working person, stricken with cancer in 2002, which recurred in 2004, and she had to quit working. She has a walker now and she gets around, but all she has is her Social Security check and food stamps. That is how she survives from week to week and month to month.

What happens when there is a government shutdown? They cut off food stamps. Did that happen last time? No. The last time the Senator from Texas shut down the government, it didn't happen because President Obama had a surplus in his recovery fund and he took the surplus and put it in the food stamps so there would be no interruption of service. You see, most of the recipients of food stamps are children. Single moms raising kids and not making enough money supplement their income with food stamps and buy food for their kids. Food stamps are also used by elderly people like Sara who are struggling on a fixed income.

This time is different. If these Presidential wannabes who are determined to shut down the government this time are successful, we are going to have problems right away. It turns out the only surplus left in the food stamp or SNAP benefit fund is about \$3 billion. That will keep the program going for 2 weeks. After 2 weeks, they cut off the food stamps. What does that mean? Well, for a lot of people it means a lot of suffering—primarily for the poorest people among us.

Did anyone notice last week what happened in Washington? The city was transformed by the visit of Pope Francis. Congress was in awe of this man who came and spoke to us in very human terms about what he thinks would be our obligation, not just as elected officials but as human beings. One of his highest priorities is that we have some caring and sensitivity for those who struggle—the poor, the people on food stamps.

So for all the applause and all of the posing for pictures that went on last week with the Pope, here we are this week discussing a government shutdown. Here we are this week discussing whether we are going to cut off food stamps for poor people in America.

It is a sad reality to think of what a government shutdown would do in human terms to those wonderful folks working at Scott Air Force Base in Belleville, IL, or to Sara who will go into the All Saints Episcopal Church food pantry and try to get by, as food stamps are cut off.

Why? Why would we do that? How can we possibly be serving this Nation—this great Nation—by stalling our economy and hurting innocent people and punishing those who are serving our country in uniform and otherwise?

Some think it is a grand strategy—a great political strategy. It may move